

The Alameda was quite deserted; everybody, with the exception of myself, having for some time retired. I sat down on a bench and continued my reflections, which were suddenly interrupted by a heavy stamping sound. Turning my eyes in the direction from which it proceeded, I perceived what at first appeared a shapeless bulk slowly advancing: nearer and nearer it drew, and I could now distinguish the outline of a man dressed in coarse brown garments, a kind of Andalusian hat, and using as a staff the long peeled branch of a tree. He had now arrived opposite the bench where I was seated, when, stopping, he took off his hat and demanded charity in uncouth tones, and in a strange jargon, which had some resemblance to the Catalan. The moon shone on grey locks, and on a ruddy weather-beaten countenance, which I at once recognized: 'Benedict Mol,' said I, 'is it possible that I see you at Compostella?' "

It came out that the half-crazed dreamer had "walked all the long way from Madrid," subsisting on charity:—

"O (he exclaimed) the misery of Galicia! When I arrive at night at one of their pigsties, which they call *posadas*, and ask for bread to eat in the name of God, and straw to lie down on, they curse me, and say there is neither bread nor straw in Galicia; and sure enough, since I have been here I have seen neither, only something that they call *broa*, and a kind of reedy rubbish with which they litter the horses; all my bones are sore since I entered Galicia."

Every day seemed only to strengthen the fancy which possessed Benedict. "The day after my arrival," said he, to take up his narrative at a subsequent period—

"I walked about all the city in quest of the church, but could find none which at all answered to the signs which my comrade, who died in the hospital, gave me. I entered several and looked about, but all in vain; I could not find the place which I had in my mind's eye. At last the people with whom I lodge, and to whom I told my business, advised me to send for a *meiga*. *Myself*. A *meiga*! What is that? Benedict. Ow! a *haxweib*, a witch; the Gallegos call them so in their jargon, of which I can scarcely understand a word. So I consented, and they sent for the *meiga*! Och! what a *weib* is that *meiga*! I never saw such a woman; she is as large as myself, and has a face as round and red as the sun. She asked me a great many questions in her Gallegan, and when I had told her all she wanted to know she pulled out a pack of cards and laid them on the table in a particular manner, and then she said that the treasure was in the church of San Roque; and sure enough, when I went to that church it answered in every respect to the signs of my comrade who died in the hospital. O she is a powerful *hax*, that *meiga*; she is well known in the neighbourhood, and has done much harm to the cattle. I gave her half the dollar I had from you for her trouble. * * Yesterday I went to one of the canons to confess myself, and to receive absolution and benediction; not that I regard these things much, but I thought this would be the best means of broaching the matter, so I confessed myself, and then I spoke of my travels to the canon, and at last I told him of the treasure, and proposed that if he assisted me we should share it between us. Ow, I wish you had seen him: he entered at once into the affair, and said that it might turn out a very profitable speculation: and he shook me by the hand, and said that I was an honest Swiss and a good Catholic. And I then proposed that he should take me into his house and keep me there till we had an opportunity of digging up the treasure together. This he refused to do."

But the canon's promised co-operation was of little avail. A short time afterwards, while Mr. Borrow was sitting in his large, scantily furnished and remote room, in an ancient "*posada* at Oviedo, formerly a palace of the Counts of Santa Cruz," Benedict Mol turned up again, and, as our readers will have conjectured, not yet in possession of his treasure. He had, indeed, fallen into trouble—made a wretched journey among the *bellotas*—been half-starved at Mondonedo, in spite of the orthodoxy of the town and his own high pretensions as a pilgrim, and now, with much grief of heart, came to the wise resolution

of leaving Spain for his native Switzerland as soon as he could obtain the means of transport:

"A strange man is this Benedict," said Antonio to me next morning, as, accompanied by a guide, we sallied forth from Oviedo; 'a strange man, mon maitre, is this same Benedict. A strange life has he led, and a strange death he will die,—it is written on his countenance. That he will leave Spain I do not believe, or if he leave it, it will be only to return, for he is bewitched about this treasure. Last night he sent for a *sorciere*, whom he consulted in my presence; and she told him that he was doomed to possess it, but that first of all he must cross water. She cautioned him likewise against an enemy, which he supposes must be the canon of Saint James. I have often heard people speak of the avidity of the Swiss for money, and here is a proof of it. I would not undergo what Benedict has suffered in these last journeys of his, to possess all the treasures in Spain.' "

Antonio was right; we cannot, however, make room for yet another reappearance of this indefatigable money-seeker at Madrid, as we must hasten to the end of the legend. In the last interview narrated by Mr. Borrow, Benedict's hopes were wilder than ever; he boasted of support he had received in his plans, made a better appearance in his dress, and laughed to scorn our author's warnings, to beware of the Spaniards, if, once being lured to partake in his hallucination, they should find themselves deceived:—

"He went, and I never saw him more. What I heard, however, was extraordinary enough. It appeared that the government had listened to his tale, and had been so struck with Benedict's exaggerated description of the buried treasure, that they imagined that, by a little trouble and outlay, gold and diamonds might be dug up at Saint James sufficient to enrich themselves and to pay off the national debt of Spain. The Swiss returned to Compostella 'like a duke,' to use his own words. The affair, which had at first been kept a profound secret, was speedily divulged. It was, indeed, resolved that the investigation, which involved consequences of so much importance, should take place in a manner the most public and imposing. A solemn festival was drawing nigh, and it was deemed expedient that the search should take place upon that day. The day arrived. All the bells in Compostella pealed. The whole populace thronged from their houses; a thousand troops were drawn up in the square; the expectation of all was wound up to the highest pitch. A procession directed its course to the church of San Roque; at its head was the captain-general and the Swiss, brandishing in his hand the magic rattan; close behind walked the *meiga*, the Gallegan witch-wife, by whom the treasure-seeker had been originally guided in the search; numerous masons brought up the rear, bearing implements to break up the ground. The procession enters the church; they pass through it in solemn march; they find themselves in a vaulted passage. The Swiss looks around. 'Dig here,' said he suddenly. 'Yes, dig here,' said the *meiga*. The masons labour, the floor is broken up,—a horrible and fetid odour arises..... Enough; no treasure was found, and my warning to the unfortunate Swiss turned out but too prophetic. He was forthwith seized and flung into the horrid prison of Saint James, amidst the execrations of thousands, who would have gladly torn him limb from limb. The affair did not terminate here. The political opponents of the government did not allow so favourable an opportunity to escape for launching the shafts of ridicule. The Moderados were taunted in the Cortes for their avarice and credulity, whilst the liberal press wafted on its wings through Spain the story of the treasure-hunt at Saint James. 'After all it was a *trampa* of Don Jorge's,' said one of my enemies. 'That fellow is at the bottom of half the picadías which happen in Spain.' Eager to learn the fate of the Swiss, I wrote to my old friend Rey Romero, at Compostella. In his answer he states: 'I saw the Swiss in prison, to which place he sent for me, craving my assistance, for the sake of the friendship which I bore to you. But how could I help him? He was speedily after removed from Saint James, I know not whither. It is said that he disappeared on the road.' Truth is sometimes stranger than fiction. Where in the whole cycle of romance shall we find anything more wild, grotesque, and sad,

than the easily authenticated history of Benedict Mol, the treasure-digger of Saint James?"

Here is a better Christmas tale than any concocted by poor weary Imagination for the *Annals*. We will not weaken its effect by drawing on the book for further matter, different in subject, yet not less novel and curious, since we must have another venture in Mr. Borrow's mine. Unlike Benedict Mol, we shall find the treasure we promise, and in rich profusion.

Recollections of Siberia, in the Years 1840 and 1841. By Charles Herbert Cottrell, Esq.
[Second Notice.]

SIBERIA, notwithstanding its boasted hospitality, its great rivers, boundless extent, and long list of indigenous nations, is still but a vast "Limbo, on the backside of the world far off," apparently designed by nature for a place of exile. European travellers, gliding over its snowy plains with horses at full speed, are pleased at the novelty, and being themselves luxuriously secured from the severity of the climate, they little heed the misery inevitably connected with it. They speculate too confidently on the prosperity of a country, in which the increase of the population falls short of the annual immigration, where man becomes in some degree a hybridizing animal, and without a stock of comports, more or less, cannot live through the winter, where the nose and ears must be wrapped in warm furs one half of the year, to prevent their being frost-bitten, and must be covered with a veil the other half, to save them from the mosquitoes.

At Yakutsk, in Eastern Siberia, and in the same parallel as the Faroe Islands, the mercury remained frozen, in 1828, for three months together. The thermometer has been known, in the same place, to descend 83° (Fahrenheit) below the freezing point. Yet Yakutsk is surrounded by forests of tall trees, and is by no means the coldest spot in that region. Our readers may, perhaps, recollect what we have elsewhere related (see *Athen.* No. 540), that the Russian-American Company bored for water in the courtyard of their establishment at Yakutsk 380 feet, and found the ground still frozen at that depth. Now this frozen soil must not be considered as a variable and incidental circumstance. The true view of the case is, that the region around Yakutsk, and extending thence north-eastward, is formed of a rock of ice, probably about 400 feet in thickness, with a thin covering of soil during three or four months in the year. Further west the icy rock has less thickness, yet it clenches fast in its cold grasp the treasures which, under a warmer sun, would flow along in all the streams. Our author informs us, that near the river Birussa, separating the governments of Irkutsk and Yenisseisk, in the 55th parallel of northern latitude, some very rich gold sands were discovered a few years ago. A company was soon formed to wash these sands, but the undertaking was as quickly abandoned, the workmen being unable to proceed to any depth in the frozen soil; or in other words, the gold was found to be disseminated in an ice-rock, which called for the expensive process of smelting. The only advantage derivable from this frozen state of the ground, may be learned from the following passage of our author:—

"At Yakutsk, the inhabitants have cellars in all their houses, made in the frozen ground, precisely as we make ice-houses in this country. In summer, when the heat is as excessive as the cold is in winter, they place all their fresh provisions, such as milk, meat, and fish, in these cellars, where everything becomes frozen in two hours. They likewise construct their graves in this manner, excepting that they make large fires above, and burn the holes in the ground. In these they might easily keep their deceased friends, without going through the process of

embalming them, in a perfect state of preservation for any length of time. Should this ever be done, it may afford new subjects of conjecture, after a lapse of thousands of years, perhaps, as interesting then as the Egyptian discoveries now are to us."

We mentioned a few years back (See *Athen.* No. 486), a fact illustrative of the remark here made: namely, that in 1821, the body of Prince Menchikof, who had been banished by Peter the Great, and had been buried under the portal of a little church built by himself in Berezo, was disinterred from the frozen soil in a state of perfect preservation. This disinterment took place in order to remove certain doubts entertained by Demetrius Kamenski, the author of an able 'History of the Contemporaries of Peter the Great.' Mr. Cottrell relates the decided opinion of M. de Hedenström, the precursor of Von Wrangell in the exploration of the Polar Sea, that the cold of Siberia decreases sensibly. But it appears to us that so general an inference cannot be safely drawn from observations made at Tomsk, or any other single place. Since, however, there is reason to believe that the greatest cold is in the vicinity of the Magnetic Poles, it is certainly a question worth the attention of philosophers, whether the distribution of cold in Siberia be not affected by the secular variation in the position of the secondary Magnetic Pole situate in that country.

The individual here named, M. de Hedenström, spent three years, viz. 1808, 1809, and 1810, on the shores of the Polar Sea, visiting New Siberia and the other islands of what he called the North-eastern Archipelago. From one of those islands he thought that he could discern land to the north, unapproachable however with the dog-sledges, an unfrozen sea intervening. M. von Wrangell could find no signs of this land, and consequently denies its existence; but M. de Hedenström still retains his belief, and we shall therefore here present an extract of the arguments on which it is founded:

"In May, 1810, being at sea two hundred and forty versts N.E. of Cape Argali, or Bear Cape, as it is called in Wrangell's map, he saw before him a light-blue ray, which by its colour and fixed position announced land in the distance. A thick fog, caused by the snow which fell about mid-day, slightly impeded his view, but a ray of the same description was from time to time discernible in a southern direction, where he knew the country of the Tchuktches to be, and a still darker point he was convinced must be Cape Schelagskoi, though he did not venture to mark it on his map. The soundings constantly diminished, and in a few versts fell from eleven and a-half to eleven fathoms. Northward it was cloudy, and the bed of the sea seemed to be higher in that direction. The fissures in the ice from time to time impeded his progress, but, at last, one of sixty feet wide stopped him altogether, and showed a rapid current towards the S.W., or in a straight line between him and Behrings' Straits. On some of these fissures he observed soil of a totally different description to that of the main land, but very like that of New Siberia, although it is too distant to allow of the supposition that it had been carried so far. It was more probable that it should have come from the presumed land northward, which is very likely to be the same substance as that of New Siberia. He saw also a white owl, and several flights of wild geese, all bearing in the direction of the blue ray, and he thinks they were going to build there, it being the season when they would naturally quit the water for a period. * * In 1762, a Russian serjeant, Andréef, was sent from the Kolymá northwards, in one of the small *baidares*, or boats covered with skins, to explore those regions. On his return, he presented a sketch of a large inhabited country in that direction. Captain Billings, afterwards, in going by land from the Kolymá to the country of the Tchuktches, was accompanied by a non-commissioned officer, a Cossack Kobeléf, who had learned at Anadrisk the *patois* of these people. He related that he had heard from the Tchuktches, that the vicinity of Cape Schelagskoi formerly contained a numerous nation called Schelagues, with whom they

were at constant war—that this nation was ultimately conquered, and fled with their reins to a large country to the northward, where they settled, and that the Tchuktches took possession of the cape which they had evacuated. * * So satisfied was Hedenström of being able to realize this plan, and of getting across to Hudson's Bay, that he drew up a singular scheme of operations, which were laid before the late Emperor, and fully approved of by him. The events of 1812 and 1813 prevented it being put into execution; and Hedenström's health had suffered so seriously, that he would afterwards have been unable to attempt so difficult an enterprise. The question of the practicability and the inutility of a north-west passage is now set at rest."

New Siberia and the islands around it have but a single claim to our attention; that, however, is a very remarkable one, and not easily disregarded: they are composed in a great measure of the bones of the mammoth, which were evidently borne thither and deposited in heaps by currents from the south; for the larger bones and the tusks, which sometimes exceeds 300 lb. in weight, are found chiefly on the mainland, while the smaller bones and fractured remains have been swept into vast heaps, in the islands to the north.

The tusks of the mammoth form an important article of trade; but the staple commodity of Siberian commerce is fur, and the hunting of the fur animals is at once the business and the pleasure of the scanty inhabitants of those wintry wilds:—

"Even when employed in agriculture, the peasant of these regions never forgets his rifle; if he is rich enough to possess one, it is seen dangling from his back on all occasions. In every part of Siberia the common people have a passion for the *chasse*, and in many it is the employment of their lives, and their principal means of subsistence. There is no word in any other language but the Russian, which expresses the meaning we intend to convey by the *chasse*. In Russian there are two words which comprise, in different senses, all that can be understood by the term. One is *okhóta*, which signifies exclusively any sort of sporting which is followed, as with us, solely for amusement's sake. The other is *promysle*, which implies that the person who is engaged in it does so for the sake of gaining subsistence by it, and exercises it as a *métier*. The first is consequently applied only to the amateur in the upper classes, while the latter belongs exclusively to the common people, as procuring for them the necessaries of life. Angling for amusement would be called by the former name; herring, whale, pearl, or coral fishing by the latter. The *promysle* is a science which it requires time and practice to acquire. Killing the reindeer as they pass the rivers requires skill and cunning. This is done by means of a tame deer which is trained for the purpose, behind which the *chasseur* is masked, and fires with his rifle or bow and arrow on the herd as they cross. The Yukaghires, settled on the banks of the river Anui, maintain themselves the whole year on the reindeer they kill in spring and autumn. At these seasons the poor animals are driven from the forests by the mosquitoes, and take shelter from them in the rivers, and even on the sea-coast, where the does always produce, and return before winter to their homes, having been preceded by the bucks. The natives having discovered where a troop has passed before, conceal themselves in light canoes under the banks, and falling on the herd as they pass, attempt to turn them against the stream. While they are swimming about, being unable to land on either side, an expert matador, as rare here as in Spain, armed with a long pike, kills them one after another, till very often not a single one escapes. The wives and children throw nooses over the horns of the wounded animals, and drag them on shore. Still greater art and patience is required in catching the beasts, the sale of whose skins is the most valuable source of subsistence to the natives. The bear, the wolf, the black, blue, red, and white foxes, squirrels, sables, marten cats, beavers, &c. &c. are generally caught in traps, in order to injure the fur as little as possible. Each of these animals must be decoyed in a different manner, and by a different

bait, and much experience is required to know exactly what suits each particular kind. The squirrel especially changes its tastes continually, and must be treated with great nicety."

The Siberian sportsman carries a rest for his rifle, and takes aim in the slowest and most deliberate manner. He fears to waste his powder, which is exceedingly expensive. Yet with all his slowness, his skill is not the less conspicuous. Careful not to damage the fur, the Siberian hunter, it is said, always hits his game, whether great or small, in the muzzle, and is sure of his mark at a distance of two or three hundred paces. These hunters feel sensibly the ills which beset the operatives in every kind of industry. Not being in a condition to make advantageous terms with their employers, they are forced to rely on the kindness of those whose interest it is to make them cheap and keep them cheap. They thus become practically the slaves of the men whom they enrich, and who arrogantly affect to be the benefactors of the hunters, whom, for gain sake, they keep alive, and barely keep alive. The Russian merchant advances to the adventurous hunter the cost of his ammunition, his small stock of brandy and provisions. The latter then sets off to the dreary wilderness, where he spends the winter, and, for the result, we have it here in our author's words:—

"On his return home the poor *chasseur* finds his creditors waiting for him, pays his debts if he has been successful, and lays out the surplus in brandy. When the brandy is all gone, he lets himself out to assist the fishermen, with no wages but his food. Winter comes round again and brings the same train of life with it; if overtaken by illness or old age they perish miserably. This custom of spending their little all in brandy deprives them of the means of fitting themselves out for the *chasse*, and they must have recourse to credit. The petty merchants in the towns, Cossacks and priests, keep these wretched people in their debt for life. In October they provide them with the necessaries for their expedition, and drive them as it were to it, being obliged to accompany them halfway for fear they should return, and barter their outfit away for brandy. The contract between them is simple enough. The *chasseur* is provided with everything on condition of giving up the whole of his booty to the purveyor on his return. A price is put on the different skins, always in favour of the creditor, who repays himself, and gives the remainder of the produce to the *chasseur*. If the expedition turns out badly, the poor man's debt cannot be discharged, and then interest accumulates on interest, till he has never a prospect of being out of debt as long as he lives. The consequence is, that every stratagem is adopted to defraud the creditor, not from sheer dishonesty, but in order to have wherewithal to satisfy the passion for brandy, without which they cannot live."

In Eastern Siberia, pastoral habits have penetrated further northward from the Mongolian deserts, and have increased the resources of the inhabitants. Among the Yakuts, the warmth of the air-tight dwelling is in a great measure owing to their cows. The same people keep great numbers of horses, which are employed in the intercourse between Irkutsk and Kamchatka. Our author describes these horses, which are considered to be the best in Siberia, at some length; yet we are nearly certain that he has never seen any of them, or else he could hardly have omitted to state that the Yakut horses are generally white. In the neighbourhood of the Yakuts are some of that race who now rule over China, but how different in fortune and in habits from their educated kinsmen of the south, may be judged from the following description:—

"Of all the Nomadic tribes in this part of East Siberia, the Tonguses are the most uncivilized and improvident. Descended originally from the Mandchus, they have lost all resemblance with those of the present day. Excepting those who live in the vicinity of Nertchynsk, the Tonguses keep neither

horses, cattle, nor dogs. They subsist solely by trapping animals for their fur, and in the long day-less winter are in great misery, and reduced to beg from their Russian neighbours. Their *yourtes* or huts are pretty much of the same description as those of the Kirghis. * * * As long as the provisions last, the Tonguse never does anything but eat, smoke, and sleep; should he kill nothing, he comes home without saying a word, sits down by the fire, lights his pipe, and then tightening his girdle, goes to sleep. The wife and family do the same, and all go supperless to bed: fastening the belt tight round the stomach is supposed to prevent them feeling hunger. A Tonguse gives the first animal he kills in the day, be it however valuable, to the first person he meets, because he attributes his success to this person's luck."

The Burats south of Irkutsk are also described by our author, but with a faintness of delineation which shows that he saw nothing of them. The Burats are a very handsome Mongolian nation, having all the wealth and more than the usual civilization, which belong to the pastoral state. They are worshippers of the Dalai Lama, and have borrowed, with the religion, the literature also, the showy rites and the singular church music of Thibet. Moorcroft's description of the processions of the Thibetan monks, with their pipes and horns, drums, and gigantic sackbuts, accords most minutely with what Ermann witnessed on the banks of the Selenga. Two English missionaries established themselves in Selinginsk, about five and twenty years ago, but received orders to quit it immediately, just at the time when our author arrived at Irkutsk. He says of them:—

"They had a printing press established at Selinginsk, and having learned the Russian, Mongolese, and Thibetan languages, they have circulated the Scriptures in each of these languages in great numbers. But that it appears is almost the only result of twenty-three years' labour and banishment. Their establishment was exceedingly comfortable; they were, in the first instance, patronized strongly by the late Emperor Alexander, who built them houses, and gave them grants of lands, and they were so completely domesticated there, that we believe no child ever felt a greater pang in being torn for the first time from his mother's side, than these worthy men did in leaving Siberia. They were in Moscow and Petersburg during the same time as ourselves, and we would gladly have done anything in our power to assist them, and as we went to Moscow with the governor-general, who they imagined to be the cause of their being sent away, we hoped to have been of service, but it was too late. The general is himself a Protestant, and in every way disposed to lend a favourable ear to them, but the complaint made against them by the bishop of the diocese was, that they were not content with failing to convert the Burats themselves, but endeavoured to persuade them not to be baptized by the Russians, whom they represented as idolaters as much as themselves. If this was the case, and this was the statement laid before the synod at Petersburg, from whom their sentence of expulsion emanated, they could not complain of their fate."

In Siberia are to be found, in abundance, adventurers and vagabonds of all nations; professors of alchemy, over-refined diplomatists, professional spies whose business has left them, and flashy impostors of all kinds, whose talents being duly appreciated by the eastern autocrat, have been rewarded with important posts and salaries of 20*l.* a year. Here is, however, an account of a singular individual, doomed, we might almost say, to be a wanderer by the *fairness* of his character:—

"We found at Tomsk a singular individual, a countryman of our own, who has established there a *trakhtir*, or little inn, with a billiard-room, the first of the sort which was known in this town. His name is Crawley; and he is one of the family of Albinos, who was exhibited in London some years ago, and afterwards travelled all over Europe, into Greece and Turkey, and then thought he should make a good speculation of going to China. His father was brought by some traveller from Abyssinia as a young man,

and married in London an English woman, and took her name. The offspring of this marriage was five children, three sons, all like the one at Tomsk, and two daughters of the mother's complexion. The one in question is now nine and thirty, has very long hair like a woman's, which is tied up behind in a *queue*, milk white, and as fine and soft as silk. He has a fair complexion, and little or no beard, and all the hair on his body is the same colour as that of his head. His eyebrows and eyelashes are the same, and his eyes rose-coloured, something lighter than a ferret's. He has long ceased to exhibit himself for money; but made a great deal at Petersburg and Moscow. After that time he did not find so many curious persons on his journey eastward to Siberia, and finding his purse diminish, thought it better not to risk spending the rest for nothing, or his plan was to go to China. His remaining capital he expended in buying some premises at Tomsk, and says he is doing well, and should do *very* well, but for the long credit he is obliged to give to a certain class of his customers, many of which debts, in the long run, become very bad ones. He has been established there about three years, and is evidently flourishing, from his having bought a new house last winter for a considerable sum of money. He speaks five or six languages."

In a country of adventurers, the discovery of mineral treasures will necessarily decide the occupation of thousands. The multitudes who are ruined by mining speculations sink into obscurity, and are never after thought of; while those who succeed catch the eye, and lure on others to the game. Here is our author's account of gold mines discovered near the rivers Touba and Ken, in the government of Yenisseisk, and which now yield to a single individual above 100,000*l.* a year:—

"Before the year 1829 no gold was found in this part of Siberia, and, in fact, very little to the east of the Ural. In that year, a merchant at Tomsk, of the name of Popof, who was already possessed of a very considerable fortune, heard accidentally that a deserter, concealed in the woods, a hundred and fifty versts east of the town, had found gold in the sands. He was an old man, and had a daughter, through whose means Popof discovered the place where her father had been digging, and immediately got a grant of the district. At first he was not very successful, the produce being only about half a *zolotnik* to a hundred puds of sand washed. He then changed the theatre of his speculations, and removed his establishment to the northward, sixteen hundred versts north of Tobolsk, and north-west of Berézof. Here he found gold, but not in great quantities; and as the soil there is constantly frozen, the expense was very great; and all the necessities of life extremely dear, no houses, and few workmen to be obtained. After having spent in all sixty-three thousand roubles, he returned to his former field of operations, and at the time of his death, in 1832, had succeeded in amassing four or five puds of gold annually. But before he did this, he had searched in three hundred different spots in the neighbourhood of Tomsk. A short time previous to his death, he is said to have lent to Mr. Astaschéf, of whom we have spoken, forty thousand roubles to begin his researches with. About the same period, came a rich merchant from Ekaterinburg, of the name of Riazánof, with a capital of two hundred thousand roubles to embark in the same speculation, and spent the whole of it without finding any gold. At last he fell in with a rich vein near the small river Kundustnik, of which Mr. Astaschéf gained intelligence, and made his application for the ground, so as to deprive the other of his lawful property, after so much time and money had been thrown away, before he was lucky enough to hit upon the treasure. A lawsuit on the subject was the consequence; but Riazánof finding that his rival had too much protection, and that he should probably lose his action, saw there was nothing for it but coming to a compromise with him. The little river near which they had commenced operations, is about a hundred versts in length, and they agreed to divide it. The speculation turned out well, the produce being a *zolotnik* to the hundred pud, or double what Popof had found. After this they formed a company, together with several of the first personages at Petersburg, as it is said the management, of course, being with the former, and the

latter being what we call sleeping partners, except that their capital and influence, if required, made them very desirable associates. The Emperor is reported to have heard of this confederation, and to have hinted to some of the parties that it was contrary to law for them to be concerned in such an enterprise, and in consequence, they sold their shares to Mr. Astaschéf, who is now a millionaire."

To this account our author characteristically adds the following remark:—"Should such immense profits, however, be realized for any length of time, it is just possible that the government may interpose and claim some share of the proceeds, at least by increasing the tax, which is now of a trifling nature, and there cannot be said to be any great injustice done, we apprehend."—If justice be a matter of principle, and not merely of convenience, the proceeding here indicated would unquestionably be grossly unjust. The Russian government has never stepped forward to pay a share of the losses in these hazardous speculations: then why should it claim a participation in the gains? What idea can that man attach to the term property, who thinks that a government has a right to decide arbitrarily, and without reference to any established rule, how much a man may possess, and thus to pillage the wealthy? Then as to the tax, the proposition of making a law for the sole purpose of attacking the property of an individual, is obviously indefensible. We cannot help thinking that our author is as little acquainted with the philosophical grounds and principles of criminal jurisprudence, as with those relating to property. Let the flippancy of the following passage be well considered:—

"In those times the knout was an instrument with the handle and apparatus weighed sixteen pounds; it is now limited by law to two. A man had been guilty of some crime, such as we have related, and the then governor-general determined to make an example of him, and he was sentenced to receive one hundred and eighty blows with this formidable weapon at two periods, ninety at each. The law now limits it to twenty-five. Mr. de Hedenström had a French servant who was always boasting that he had seen and done all sorts of things, but his great anxiety was to see a man knouted. His master told him there was now a capital opportunity for him to gratify his curiosity; he rubbed his hands and was *enchanté*. As soon as the culprit was undressed and tied to the post, the Frenchman's courage began to ooze out at his fingers' ends, and at the first blow he fainted away. The fellow received the ninety cuts, and was taken to the hospital, where the Frenchman went to visit him. At the end of a fortnight he was in a state to receive the other ninety *coups*, which were accordingly administered to him, and still he did not die under the operation. He lingered, however, only a week in the hospital, because it was winter, when they say it is difficult to cure them, but that in summer he might have been saved, which, however, of course was not the intention of the governor. After a punishment of a much less horrible nature than this, if they give the sufferer a little brandy to restore him in the hospital, he generally gets over it, but if they wish to dispatch him they have only to give him a glass of water, which brings on apoplexy and instant death."

This is the terrible punishment which the Empress Catherine occasionally inflicted on the ladies of her court. Our author cannot conceal the pleasure he feels in describing it. He uses in his account of it with an invective, in strained and exaggerated language, against the villainy of culprits in general. He points out the diminished weight of the knout, as a proof that those barbarous doctrines of humanity, to which he is so adverse, have extended even into Russia; and gives an instance of the severe application of that instrument of torture, to prove the spirit and judgment of the governor-general who ordered it. But Mr. Cottrell openly contends against anything like leniency in the administration of justice; he conceives that punishments cannot be too harsh.

barous. He thus develops his views on this subject:—

"In those times (thirty years ago) the crime of murder was punished by having the nostrils torn out with hot pincers, an operation which, though not strictly speaking agreeable, is not to be compared to the pain of half a dozen blows with the knout. This has been long since abolished, and it is considered in Siberia, by many, that this act of humanity was productive of much evil, as it stamped an indelible mark upon the culprit by which he could be for ever recognized, that branded him with ignominy, and prevented him ever making his escape from his place of exile. This it was in fact which prevented the *Taysha* in question from returning to his home; he was sure to be informed against by his successor, who might be jealous of his recovering his authority, or some one else to whom he had done an injustice; and the internal rage he felt at the impossibility of concealing his shame, prompted him to die in exile rather than escape like his companions. Crime has increased to a notorious extent since that fatal mark has been abolished; the convicted felon is now merely branded on the forehead with a hot iron, of which all trace can easily be removed in a few days by the application of three slices of garlic on the three letters. In the other case the criminal could literally not show his nose, without being recognised, and all attempt at escape was, therefore, hopeless. An outcry is raised when the knout is talked of, but not a word in pity for the poor wretches who are barbarously murdered by these ruffians in the way we have before described."

Here we have vindictive justice plainly advocated, and the gravest questions handled with offensive levity. We have always understood, and do still believe, that splitting of the nose, as well as branding on the forehead, always follow the punishment of the knout, which proves fatal, it must be observed, in a majority of cases. Some expire under the infliction, others, two or three days after. When Mr. Cottrell writes that the punishment of death is reserved, in Russia, for high treason alone, he only satisfies us of his giddy and undiscerning habits. The knout may in all cases cause death, but it is sure to do so if the magistrate chooses, and even the attendants in the prison, as our author himself shows us, have it in their option to save, or to kill, the tortured man. So much for that brutal and unsteady system of punishments which our author would doubtless introduce into his native country, unconscious, as he appears to be, of its superior civilization.

On his route back from Siberia, he visited Kasan, of which he remarks that it was burned down in 1815. His volume was, we presume, in the press when that handsome, but ill-fated, city, was again completely consumed, and with its public library was destroyed the finest collection of oriental manuscripts made in recent times. The Anglomania, said to be so prevalent in Moscow, does not surprise us; the Russians have been always famous for their imitative talents, but we do not feel bound to respond to it, by any Russomania here. For the pleasures and smart sayings which Mr. Cottrell (who would call them *mots*) has scattered through his pages, we refer to his volume, which will amuse, without misleading, those who shall have paid due attention to the strictures made on it in our columns.

OUR LIBRARY TABLE.

The Parent's Hand-book, or Guide to the Choice of Professions, Employments, and Situations, by J. C. Hudson, Esq.—This little work contains succinct information respecting the preparations necessary for entering professional life, and an estimate of the emoluments which may be expected under ordinary circumstances. It will be of service in guiding the wealthy or influential in selecting the path of public life which they should wish their children to pursue; and it ought to be of still greater service to those who possess neither great wealth nor powerful interest, in deterring them from educating young men for the

church, the army, or the navy. The university advantages attached to particular schools, names, and localities, render the church a more accessible, and perhaps a more favourable profession for young men of the middle classes, whose circumstances or position afford them a fair chance of participating in exhibitions, scholarships, fellowships, and endowments; and the sale of presentations, which are advertised every day, may enable parents to obtain an annuity for a son at a moderate price: but the army and navy are only open to expensive purchase, united to political influence; and a prudent parent will hesitate before he indulges his son's taste for scarlet and gold lace, which, in nineteen cases out of twenty, is the passion represented by youths as a thirst for military glory. This little volume is pre-eminently practical; the writer makes no reflections on the arrangements he describes, and deduces no inferences from the facts which he states; but few can read of the usages by which professions are regulated in this country, without seeing that they are characterized by a spirit of exclusiveness and unfairness; that their principle of government is to strengthen those who are already strong. The account which Mr. Hudson gives of the disposal of places in the public offices of government, exhibits a picture scarcely less deplorable than that which he has drawn of clerical and collegiate endowments. We trust that his work will have the effect of directing public attention to the subject, and that an effort may be made to open to honourable exertion and honest competition those places which are now reserved for very questionable services.

The Botanical Looker-Out, &c., by Edwin Lees.—Any work which contains descriptions of the woods and fields, and the thousand things of beauty which they present as the Year goes round, is sure to be welcomed by us. The sight of these pages exercises a spell like that of the song of the bird "at the corner of Wood Street" over Wordsworth's Susan. In place of a crowded library, made all the dingier by the pertinacious fogs of early Winter, we have

A mountain ascending, a vision of trees—

in place of sour critical questionings—but we had better stop, ere "babbling of green fields" make us childish. To speak, then, without visionary influences, this book by Mr. Lees is a pleasant chronicle of the months; full of wholesome prose, starred with scraps of poetry. We like it none the less, because its botanical researches contain constant references to one of the loveliest districts in England—South Wales and its neighbourhood; the author's general descriptions acquire thereby a local colour, which enhances their interest. On the whole, the 'Looker-Out' is to be recommended as a Christmas present.

A Glance at the Temple Church, by Felix Summerly.—A useful little manual, which contains a sketch of the history of the building, and an account of the late restorations. It is got up in a pretty fanciful style, and is illustrated by many woodcuts.

The Bijou Almanack.—This prettiest of literary trifles comes forth this year under the protecting patronage of Miss Mitford, and is graced with portraits of the Prince of Wales, the King of Prussia, the Duchess of Orleans, Miss Adelaide Kemble, Samuel Rogers, and Herr Döbler. The portraits we must leave to be judged by younger eyes than ours; but of the descriptive letter-press we can offer a sample, so that our readers may decide for themselves. Here are the—

INTRODUCTORY STANZAS.

Seven years are gone since first we won
A look from cordial faces,
And now we strike our octave, like
A minstrel used to praises.

And if you say we fall away
From first notes which were sweeter,
Ah Lady Flowers, brave Bachelors,
Do seven years spare you better?

So throw us down, for silver crown,
One smile, and we release you;
There's Puck may brook to kiss the book,
And swear 'twas meant to please you.

But the tiny volume offers variety. We have verses to the—

Little Prince, who liest warm,
Cradled on a snowy arm;
and to all others whose portraits figure here, including the Bard of Memory, and the "bright daughter of a gifted line"—

As some strange comet brief and bright
Thy genius flashed across the night,
A moment cast its lambent flame
O'er the proud scene of Siddons' fame,
Then sought a calmer happier bourne,
And left the admiring crowd to mourn.

We may here mention, that the Queen of Prussia has written an autograph letter, and presented, through the Chevalier Bunsen, a gold medal to Mr. Schloss, the publisher of the 'Bijou Almanack,' in acknowledgment of the copy received of the King's Cologne speech, printed in letters of gold by Mr. Schloss.

A Voice from the Town, and other Poems, by J. B. Rogerson.—Mr. Rogerson has made himself a reputation in the world in which he lives, and gained many well-wishers beyond it, by a previous volume entitled 'Rhyme, Romance and Revery;' in which he aimed at expressing more than one of the moods of the lyre,—passing "from grave to gay, from lively to severe,"—and recorded some pleasant thoughts and graceful fancies. His present volume will be less popular, because it is less varied; but it exhibits the same pure tastes and right feelings—a little too much, perhaps, "sicklied o'er with the pale hue" of sentiment, and a trifle too fondly indulging in personality, and betraying the consciousness of *clique*. This very circumstance, however, procures for the reader glimpses into that ideal kingdom which such persons as the author and his friends have conquered for themselves amid the asperities of an unpropitious fortune: showing how humble and gifted men have contrived to seek each other out, by the sound of the harp-string, over the rough places of life, and set up a rest for its weariness in that sort of association wherein they hand round from one to another the intellectual "cup," with its sweetening of mutual praise and gratulation "which cheers but not inebriates." Mr. Rogerson, an inhabitant of Manchester, writes down the list of his literary club with evident satisfaction, and poetical comment: and in it figure names—such as those of Samuel Bamford and John Critchley Prince—with which the readers of the *Athenæum* have, already, made acquaintance. The fact is worth noting, among the signs of the times: and improved happiness and goodness may be looked for as conditions of a society, in which the compensations that men seek for the austerities of a hard lot are based upon a sense of intellectual worth, and supplied by the exercise of an intellectual faculty.

The Ancient Gothic Church, and other Poems.—The description of this ancient church is, perhaps, a trifle too diffuse for a good business document; otherwise, it is given with such professional exactness, and about as much poetry, as might serve for the specification in an architect's office:—and the minor poems that accompany it are such as the clerks might have scribbled on waste-paper, when they should have been employed in copying the aforesaid specification.

New Novels.—A rush of new novels is as sure a sign that Christmas is coming, as the appearance of holly and turnip nosegays in Covent Garden Market, or *bonbons* in the confectioners' shops. To all, inasmuch as they imply the return of a season which shall be merry—let Time treat us how he will—grace and welcome! But, alas! we are critics, as well as Christmas revellers: and, in spite of every kind thought which it is the nature of the season to awaken, dare not lay by our old puritanical habit of truth-telling. Thus, when we open *The M.D.'s Daughter*, by the author of the *M.P.'s Wife*, we must remark, that the new tale by no means equals its predecessor. That, if our memory serve us, was a fairly written story of woman's ambition; this is merely a melodramatic combination of May Fair manners and Minerva Press crimes. The M.D.'s daughter and her lover are gratuitously harassed and tried by the machinations of a sister of the hero, who, to prevent his marrying, spreads the report that the young lady is subject to fits of insanity, trafficking openly with the basest of agents, for the accomplishment of her horrible purpose. The droll of the story is an Irishman; the tragic interest is, in part, maintained by continental gambling scenes. The conclusion is such as to satisfy all lovers of poetical justice. We must be pardoned for adding, that we hope the author will not carry further his plan of exhausting the alphabet for titles; being a little afraid of 'The M.A.'s Aunt,' 'The Q.C.'s Son-in-Law,' and a long line of